

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BOGOTA 08457 01 OF 02 042118Z

70

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

IO-10 EB-07 SAB-01 COME-00 FRB-03 TRSE-00 LAB-04

SIL-01 SCCT-01 CU-02 AGR-05 /096 W

----- 098655

R 041750Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 607

INFO AMCONSUL CALI

AMCONSUL MEDELLIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BOGOTA 8457

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, CO

SUBJECT: THE LOPEZ ADMINISTRATION TAKES HOLD

1. SUMMARY. AT THE END OF ITS FIRST YEAR THE LOPEZ ADMINISTRATION HAS DEMONSTRATED ITS ABILITY TO GOVERN EFFECTIVELY AND EVEN, AT TIMES, IMAGINATIVELY. AFTER TURNING IN WHAT SEEMED A SOMEWHAT LACKLUSTER PERFORMANCE DURING THE EARLIER PART OF THE PERIOD IT CAME ON STRONGER DURING THE FINAL MONTHS AS THE ADMINISTRATION GAINED GREATER CONFIDENCE AND AUTHORITY AND PROGRAMS STARTED EARLIER BEGAN TO PROVE THEMSELVES. WHAT APPEARED AS AN UNCERTAIN AND EVEN BUMBLING HANDLING OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TYPIFIED IN THE ADMINISTRATION'S FIRST OUTING AT THE QUITO CONFERENCE, HAS EVOLVED INTO A CAUTIOUS, PRAGMATIC PURSUIT OF COLOMBIA'S INTERESTS. WHILE COLOMBIA IS MOVING AWAY FROM A CLOSE IDENTIFICATION WITH THE U.S., THE LOPEZ ADMINISTRATION REMAINS BASICALLY FRIENDLY. COLOMBIA MAY HOPE TO PLAY THE ROLE OF MIDDLEMAN IN WHAT COLOMBIANS PERCEIVE AS GROWING U.S. -L.A. CONFRONTATION; IT WILL CERTAINLY HAVE THE CAPACITY TO DO SO.

THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT LIVED UP TO POPULAR EXPECTATIONS

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BOGOTA 08457 01 OF 02 042118Z

WITH REGARD TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROGRAMS, BUT NEITHER HAS

IT JUSTIFIED THE INITIAL AND LARGELY UNREASONED FEARS OF SOME ECONOMIC GROUPS, WHICH NOW APPEAR TO HAVE ACCOMMODATED THEMSELVES TO THE ADMINISTRATION. THE TAX REFORM PACKAGE ENACTED DURING THE ECONOMIC EMERGENCY HAS AT LEAST PROVIDED THE BASIS FOR THE BEGINNING OF A MORE EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH AND HAS CONTRIBUTED TO SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN SLOWING THE COST-OF-LIVING INCREASE. THE GOVERNMENT ENJOYS BROAD POLITICAL SUPPORT IN THE CONGRESS AND THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, UP NOTICEABLY SINCE A DROP IN CONFIDENCE AT THE END OF 1974, ALTHOUGH THERE ARE ALSO FOCI OF DISCONTENT (E.G. SEGMENTS OF THE URBAN WORKING CLASS, STUDENTS) SIMMERING BENEATH THE SURFACE. RURAL GUERRILLA ACTIVITY CONTINUES AT THE SAME RATE AS IN THE PAST BUT URBAN TERRORISM, PRIMARILY IN THE FORM OF KIDNAPPINGS, MAY BE ON THE RISE. END SUMMARY

2. FOREIGN POLICY. THE CENTRAL DEVELOPMENT IN COLOMBIAN FOREIGN POLICY DURING THE FIRST YEAR OF THE LOPEZ ADMINISTRATION FROM THE U.S. POINT OF VIEW HAS BEEN THE CLEAR EMERGENCE OF A POLICY OF ATTAINING AT LEAST THE APPEARANCE OF EQUALITY AND INDEPENDENCE IN ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U.S. THIS POLICY APPEARS DESIGNED TO ENHANCE COLOMBIA'S ABILITY TO EXERCISE GREATER INFLUENCE AMONG OTHER L.A. COUNTRIES AND LDC'S. THERE HAS BEEN GROWING EVIDENCE THAT COLOMBIA IS MOVING TO ADOPT A MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN REGIONAL AFFAIRS.

3. THE MOVE TOWARD EQUALITY AND LESSER DEPENDENCY VIS-A-VIS THE U.S. IS THE PRODUCT OF SEVERAL FACTORS. IT RESPONDS TO THE VIEW PROBABLY LONG HELD BY LOPEZ AND SUCH CLOSE COLLABORATORS AS FINANCE MINISTER BOTERO THAT COLOMBIAN-US RELATIONS THOUGH FRIENDLY SHOULD BE AT ARMS LENGTH, TOGETHER WITH MORE RECENT DOUBTS ABOUT THE SINCERITY OF OUR INTEREST AND OUR CAPACITY TO COOPERATE ON PROBLEMS AFFECTING COLOMBIA, AND THE CONCLUSION THAT COLOMBIA CANNOT DEPEND UPON CLOSE TIES WITH US ALONE TO DEFEND ITS INTERESTS. (BOGOTA 2128). LOPEZ' EXPERIENCE IN HIS FIRST FOREIGN POLICY VENTURE AT THE QUITO CONFERENCE OF FOREIGN MINISTERS IN NOV 1974 WHEN, AS THE GOC SAW IT, THE U.S. FAILED TO SUPPORT THE COLOMBIAN CO-SPONSORED INITIATIVE TO LIFT OAS CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BOGOTA 08457 01 OF 02 042118Z

SANCTIONS ON CUBA, AND BY ABSTAINING, CONDEMNED IT TO FAILURE, REINFORCED THE BELIEF THAT COLOMBIA SHOULD DIMINISH ITS RELIANCE ON THE U.S. THE IMMEDIATE RESULT OF THE QUITO EXPERIENCE WAS THE DECISION BY THE GOC TO RECOGNIZE CUBA. GIVEN COLOMBIA'S TRADITION OF RESPECT FOR LEGALITY AND FOR WORKING WITHIN THE OAS, CUBAN RECOGNITION WAS INDEED A SIGNIFICANT STEP. IT WAS A RESULT OF PIQUE OVER THE OUTCOME OF THE QUITO CONFERENCE, IMPATIENCE WITH THE OAS SYSTEM AND

WITH THE U.S., AND THE MOMENTUM OF EARLIER GOC ACTIONS ON CUBA (IN THE CLOSING DAYS OF THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT, CONSERVATIVE PRESIDENT PASTRANA, DESCRIBED THE COLOMBIAN-CUBAN AIR PIRACY AGREEMENT AS THE BEGINNING OF A RAPPROCHEMENT WITH CUBA. IN HIS JULY 20 SPEECH, LOPEZ ASKED, COULD WE HAVE DONE LESS THAN CONTINUE ON THAT ROAD? CUBAN RECOGNITION WAS CLEAR EVIDENCE OF THE GOC'S WILLINGNESS TO TAKE AN INDEPENDENT LINE ON MATTERS WHICH IT PERCEIVES AS AFFECTING ITS INTERESTS, WITHOUT REGARD TO U.S. DESIRES.

4. IN A SERIES OF SUBSEQUENT VISITS AND MEETINGS WITH OTHER HEADS OF GOVERNMENT, LOPEZ HAS MOVED CAUTIOUSLY AND PRAGMATICALLY TO ESTABLISH A POSITION OF REGIONAL LEADERSHIP AND INITIATIVE. IN THE MARCH 1975 MEETING IN PANAMA WITH THE HEADS OF THE COSTA RICAN, PANAMANIAN, AND VENEZUELAN GOVERNMENTS, LOPEZ DECLARED HIS SUPPORT IN MODERATE TERMS FOR PANAMA'S ASPIRATIONS REGARDING THE CANAL ZONE AND, IN ANOTHER MOVE UNDERTOOK TO CONTINUE COLOMBIA'S RIGHTS UNDER THE THOMSON-URRUTIA AGREEMENT BY DEALING DIRECTLY WITH PANAMA, RATHER THAN RELYING ON THE U.S. THE MEETING IN SANTA MARTA, COLOMBIA IN JULY WITH VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT PEREZ AND PANAMA GENERAL TORRIJOS, WAS PRIMARILY A FORUM FOR LOPEZ AND PEREZ TO COORDINATE ANDEAN PACT POLICY AND DISCUSS BILATERAL ISSUES. LOPEZ CLEARLY PLACES MUCH IMPORTANCE ON THE RELATIONSHIP WITH VENEZUELA FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS, INCLUDING HISTORICAL TIES, GEOGRAPHIC PROXIMITY, COMMON DEMOCRATIC FORMS, VENEZUELA'S WEALTH, IDEOLOGICAL SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNING PARTIES, AND LONG ASSOCIATION IF NOT FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN PEREZ AND LOPEZ. IT IS EQUALLY CLEAR THAT COLOMBIA'S APPROACH TO THIS RELATIONSHIP IS CHARACTERIZED BY THE SAME PRAGMATIC PURSUIT OF COLOMBIA'S INTERESTS THAT

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 BOGOTA 08457 01 OF 02 042118Z

INSPIRES COLOMBIA'S OTHER RELATIONS. THE PRINCIPAL OUTSTANDING DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES; THE OFFSHORE BOUNDARY DISPUTE IN THE GULF OF VENEZUELA AND THE SITUATION OF THE ESTIMATED ONE-HALF TO ONE MILLION COLOMBIANS LIVING ILLEGALLY IN VENEZUELA, WILL PROBABLY NOT, ASSUMING MUTUAL FOREBEARANCE, JOEPARDIZE CORDIAL RELATIONS BUT THEY WILL REMAIN AT LEAST POTENTIAL IRRITANTS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES FOR SOME TIME. AT ANY RATE, LOPEZ DOES NOT APPEAR PREPARED TO HITCH COLOMBIA'S STAR TO VENEZUELA'S FOREIGN POLICY AMBITIONS. LOPEZ'S RECENT AUGUST MEETING WITH PRESIDENT RODRIGUEZ IN QUITO IS THE FIRST IN WHAT WILL PROBABLY BE A SERIES OF VISITS TO ANDEAN PACT CAPITALS AIMED AT ESTABLISHING A LEADING ROLE FOR COLOMBIA IN THE PACT AND IN THE REGION- LOPEZ ALSO SIGNED AN AGREEMENT ON SEA LIMITS WHICH PROTECTS COLOMBIA'S RIGHTS BUT WHICH DOES NOT CHANGE COLOMBIA'S LOS

POSITIONS. LOPEZ APPEARS TO ENVISION COLOMBIA RATHER THAN VENEZUELA, AS THE NATURAL LEADER AND SPOKESMAN IN THE ANDEAN PACT, NOT MERELY DESPITE VENEZUELA'S AFFLUENCE AND AMBITION BUT BECAUSE THESE ATTRIBUTES AWAKEN APPREHENSIONS REGARDING VENEZUELA AMONG OTHER STATES.

5. THUS, LOPEZ FOREIGN POLICY STRATEGY APPEARS TO BE (1) TO ESTABLISH COLOMBIA AS AN INFLUENTIAL MIDDLE POWER IN REGIONAL FORA, INDEPENDENT ENOUGH FROM THE U.S. TO BE CREDIBLE TO THE MORE MILITANT COUNTRIES AND (2) BY VIRTUE OF MODERATE POLICIES AND DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS, BE IN A POSITION TO MAINTAIN AMICABLE AND FRUITFUL RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. BY SO DOING COLOMBIA WOULD BE IN A STRONGER POSITION TO PLAY A KEY ROLE AS BROKER OR MIDDLEMAN IN WHAT THE COLOMBIANS SEE AS A SITUATION OF GROWING U.S.-L.A. CONFRONTATION. LOPEZ IS WELL ON THE WAY TO ACCOMPLISHING THE FIRST PORTION OF THE EQUATION. THE SECOND PORTION DEPENDS IN PART ON THE U.S. RESPONSE ON A NUMBER OF COMMON ISSUES. QUITA SUENO, THE COFFEE AGREEMENT, THE TRADE PREFERENCES PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE THE TONE OF THE U.S. COLOMBIAN RELATIONSHIP. TWO ADDITIONAL ISSUES, THE PANAMA CANAL TREATY AND THE GOC REQUIREMENT THAT FOREIGN-OWNED BANKS SELL DOWN TO A MINORITY POSITION POSSESS THE POTENTIAL FOR SERIOUS DAMAGE TO U.S.-COLOMBIAN RELATIONS.

6. CONCERN FOR INCREASING FOREIGN TRADE (EVIDENCED BY LOPEZ'S FREQUENT REFERENCE TO COLOMBIA'S POTENTIAL OF BECOMING THE

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 05 BOGOTA 08457 01 OF 02 042118Z

JAPAN OF LATIN AMERICA) IS AN UNDERLYING CONSIDERATION IN COLOMBIAN FOREIGN POLICY. LOPEZ IN HIS INAUGURAL ADDRESS STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF TRADE RELATIONS WITH THE COMMUNIST COUNTRIES, AND SEVERAL COMMERCIAL AGREEMENTS HAVE BEEN

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BOGOTA 08457 02 OF 02 042140Z

70

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

IO-10 EB-07 SAB-01 COME-00 FRB-03 TRSE-00 LAB-04

SIL-01 SCCT-01 CU-02 AGR-05 /096 W

----- 098904

R 041750Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 608

INFO AMCONSUL CALI

AMCONSUL MEDELLIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BOGOTA 8457

SIGNED. THIS WAS A CONTINUANCE OF PREDECESSOR POLICIES AND DOES NOT PORTEND ANY SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN COLOMBIA'S RELATIONSHIPS WITH THESE COUNTRIES.

7. THE DOMESTIC RECORD. ABOUT HALFWAY THROUGH HIS FIRST YEAR PRESIDENT LOPEZ CORRECTLY OBSERVED THAT HE HAD SPENT SO MUCH TIME "PUTTING OUT THE FIRES" HE HAD INHERITED THAT HIS OTHER OBJECTIVES HAD SUFFERED. THE SITUATION UNDOUBTEDLY CONTRIBUTED TO AN IMPRESSION OF LIMPNESS OF STYLE AND UNCERTAINTY OF DIRECTION ON THE PART OF THE ADMINISTRATION AS LOPEZ MOVED, IN PART BY EXPERIMENT, TO "PUT OUT FIRES" AND PLACE HIS OWN STAMP ON THE GOVERNMENT. AFTER OVER A YEAR IN OFFICE THE IMAGE AND RECORD OF THE LOPEZ ADMINISTRATION HAVE GREATLY IMPROVED FOR SEVERAL REASONS, AMONG THEM (1) THE FISCAL SUCCESS OF THE TAX REFORMS WHICH HAVE GREATLY IMPROVED REVENUES AND HELPED SLOW INFLATION, AND THEIR PSYCHOLOGICAL ACCEPTANCE BY ECONOMIC GROUPS WHICH FORMERLY FELT THREATENED, (2) LOPEZ'S DECLARATION OF A STATE OF SIEGE, WHICH INVESTED HIM WITH A GREATER AURA OF AUTHORITY AND DECISIVENESS, (3) LOPEZ'S RECENT MOVE TO ASSUME THE ROLE OF LIBERAL PARTY LEADER, AND (4) THE WINDFALL OF THE BRAZILIAN COFFEE FROST WHICH GUARANTEES INCREASED COFFEE EARNINGS AND HAS IMPARTED NEW OPTIMISM IN THE COUNTRY.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BOGOTA 08457 02 OF 02 042140Z

8. THE FOLLOWING BALANCE SHEET OF THE GOVERNMENT'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND FAILURES WOULD INDICATE THAT THE ADMINISTRATION DURING ITS FIRST YEAR HAS DONE A CREDITABLE JOB DEALING WITH THE "FIRES" AND LAYING THE BASIS FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF LONGER-TERM OBJECTIVES:
A) THE COST-OF-LIVING INCREASE. (ONE OF LOPEZ'S "FIRES") WHICH AVERAGED AROUND 26 PERCENT THROUGH 1974, HAS SLOWED SIGNIFICANTLY AND 1975'S OUTLOOK IS FOR AN INCREASE OF ABOUT 20 PC. THE IMPROVEMENT, HOWEVER, HAS BEEN AT THE COST OF INCREASED UNEMPLOYMENT AND A DROP IN THE ECONOMIC GROWTH RATE.
B) THE TAX REFORMS ENACTED DURING THE ECONOMIC EMERGENCY CONSTITUTE A CREDIBLE START TOWARD THE GOAL OF A MORE EQUITABLE

DISTRIBUTION OF THE COUNTRY'S WEALTH. THE INCREASE IN REVENUES HAS SERVED AS A WEAPON AGAINST INFLATION BY REMOVING PESOS FROM CONSUMERS' POCKETS. THE GOVERNMENT'S PLAN IS TO USE THE REVENUES THUS GAINED TO FINANCE PROGRAMS WHICH WILL FURNISH BADLY NEEDED SOCIAL SERVICES TO THE POOR. THESE PROGRAMS INCLUDE THE ALREADY ENACTED SALA CUNA LAW, WHICH ESTABLISHES FREE DAY CARE CENTERS IN CITIES FOR PRESCHOOLERS, AS WELL AS PLANS TO IMPROVE HEALTH, EDUCATION AND NUTRITION IN RURAL AREAS. IN ADDITION TO THE DIRECT, FAVORABLE SOCIAL IMPACT OF THESE PROGRAMS, THE GOVERNMENT EXPECTS THAT THE CONSTRUCTION OF SCHOOLS, ROADS, HOSPITALS, WATER SUPPLY AND SEWAGE SYSTEMS WILL PROVIDE A FILLIP TO THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY AND TO EMPLOYMENT. IT IS NOT AT ALL CLEAR, HOWEVER, WHETHER EVEN GIVEN ADEQUATE FINANCING THE GOVERNMENT'S ADMINISTRATIVE/TECHNICAL APPARATUS IS CAPABLE OF MAKING SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS CREATING, STAFFING AND OPERATING THESE AMBITIOUS PROGRAMS, SAY BY THE 1978 ELECTIONS.

C) SECURITY HAS BECOME OF GROWING CONCERN TO COLOMBIAN SOCIETY, MUCH AS IT HAS FOR MANY OTHERS. ALTHOUGH POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND GUERRILLA ACTIVITY HAVE PROBABLY NOT INCREASED OVER THE LEVELS OF RECENT YEARS, THE PUBLIC'S CONCERN OVER WHAT IT PERCEIVES AS A RISE IN CRIMINAL ACTIVITY HAS GROWN. THE ROOT CAUSES OF THE LAWLESSNESS ARE NOT APPARENT. IN BOGOTA, FOR EXAMPLE, MOST OF THE CRIMINALS ARE EMPLOYED NATIVE BORN CITY DWELLERS FROM THE WORKING CLASS OR LOWER MIDDLE CLASS, RATHER THAN THE UNEMPLOYED OR ALIENATED PEASANTS RECENTLY TRANSPLANTED TO THE CITY. SOURCES CLOSE TO LOPEZ REPORT THAT IT WAS PRIMARILY HIS CONCERN OVER CRIME, ESPECIALLY KIDNAPPING, WHICH CAUSED HIM TO PROCLAIM A STATE OF SIEGE. SO FAR THE STATE OF SIEGE SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN MORE EFFECTIVE AS A PSYCHOLOGICAL SECURITY BLANKET, RATHER THAN CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BOGOTA 08457 02 OF 02 042140Z

AS A MEANS TO REDUCE CRIME, ALTHOUGH IT IS PROBABLY TOO SOON TO TELL. ITS EFFECTIVENESS AGAINST KIDNAPPERS, WHO OPERATE IN SMALL RELATIVELY PROFESSIONAL GANGS, IS EVEN MORE DOUBTFUL. MOST KIDNAPPINGS HITHERTO APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN PURELY CRIMINAL OPERATIONS, RATHER THAN FOR THE PURPOSE OF FINANCING POLITICAL SUBVERSION. WHILE IT IS NOT YET CLEAR WHETHER THE RECENT KIDNAPPING OF SEARS EXECUTIVE DONALD COOPER WAS CRIMINAL OR POLITICAL, IT SEEMS LIKELY TO HAVE BEEN THE LATTER. THE PROBLEM OF SECURITY AGAINST CRIME -- AND AGAINST POLITICAL TERRORISM -- MAY BE ONE OF THE MOST INTRACTABLE ITEMS ON THE LOPEZ AGENDA.

D) STABILITY. THE OUTLOOK FOR STABILITY IS BETTER NOW THAN IT HAS BEEN DURING MOST OF THE YEAR. THE WAVE OF MORE OR LESS SPONTANEOUS CIVIC STRIKES (PAROS CIVICOS) AGAINST HIGH PRICES AND POOR PUBLIC SERVICES WHICH PLAGUED THE GOVERNMENT, ESPECIALLY IN THE FALL AND WINTER OF 1974, SUBSIDED EVEN BEFORE THE IMPOSITION OF THE STATE OF SIEGE FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS, SOME OF THEM NOT ALTOGETHER CLEAR. THERE ARE NO TROUBLESOME LABOR DISPUTES UNDER WAY OR ON THE HORIZON. THE POLITICALLY VOLATILE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS, NOW ON VACATION, CAN BE EXPECTED TO RESUME

THEIR PERENNIAL AGITATION AFTER THE RESUMPTION OF CLASSES. THE ACTIVITIES OF THE GUERRILLA BANDS WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE AT THE SAME RATE OF RECENT YEARS. THE SPECIAL POWERS CONFERRED TO THE GOVERNMENT BY THE STATE OF SIEGE WILL HAVE AN INHIBITING EFFECT ON ALL OF THE ABOVE SECTORS. DISSATISFACTION AMONG SOME SECTORS OF THE MILITARY OVER THE FIRING OF THE POPULAR FORMER ARMY COMMANDER GENERAL VALENCIA TOVAR AND LOPEZ'S HANDLING OF PUBLIC ORDER SEEMS TO HAVE SUBSIDED, ESPECIALLY AFTER THE DECLARATION OF A STATE OF SIEGE WHICH INCREASED THE MILITARY'S PUBLIC SECURITY ROLE AS WELL AS THEIR SALARIES.

9. SUPPORT FOR LOPEZ IN THE LIBERAL AND CONSERVATIVE PARTIES AND IN THE CONGRESS IS ALSO STRONGER THAN AT ANY TIME DURING THE PAST YEAR. THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY HAS BEEN FROM THE BEGINNING UNSWERVING IN ITS SUPPORT FOR LOPEZ, PROBABLY IN ORDER TO IMPROVE ITS CHANCES TO CONTINUE TO PARTICIPATE IN FUTURE GOVERNMENTS BY PROVING ITSELF AS A LOYAL AND USEFUL COALITION ALLY, AND IN ORDER NOT TO DO ANYTHING TO DISCOURAGE DIVISION IN THE LIBERAL PARTY, WHICH PLAYING SOME SORT OF OPPOSITION ROLE MIGHT TEND TO DO. THE PRESIDENT'S OWN LIBERAL PARTY SEEMED UNTIL A FEW MONTHS AGO TO BE THE POTENTIAL SOURCE OF AN EFFECTIVE OPPOSITION, WITH THE ASSUMPTION BY EX-PRESIDENT CARLOS LLERAS OF A POSITION CRITICAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 BOGOTA 08457 02 OF 02 042140Z

OF LOPEZ. LLERAS HAS SINCE, HOWEVER, VEERED TO A POSITION IN SUPPORT OF LOPEZ (A-84) AND THROUGH HIS MOVEMENT FOR LIBERAL DEMOCRATIZATION (MLD) IS CONCENTRATING ON WEAKENING JULIO CESAR TURBAY'S CONTROL OVER THE PARTY. LOPEZ IS MAINTAINING NEUTRALITY IN THE LLERAS-TURBAY STRUGGLE, AND HAS MADE CLEAR THAT HE DOES NOT REGARD AS HARMFUL THE CLASH OF DIFFERING OPINIONS WITHIN THE PARTY, AS LONG AS SUPPORT FOR THE GOVERNMENT IS NOT JEOPARDIZED. LOPEZ, WHO HAD MAINTAINED A STRICTLY HANDS OFF ATTITUDE IN PARTY MATTERS FROM THE BEGINNING OF HIS ADMINISTRATION, HAS NOW MOVED TO ORGANIZE LOYALIST GROUPINGS OF LOPISTAS IN BOTH HOUSES OF CONGRESS AND IN THE BOGOTA LIBERAL DIRECTORATE. THE STRATEGY SEEMS CLEAR: LOPEZ IS AND AIMS TO CONTINUE BEING IN A POSITION TO PLAY A DETERMINING ROLE WITH REGARD TO WHO THE NEXT LIBERAL PARTY PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE WILL BE, AND THUS TO ENSURE THE GOOD BEHAVIOR OF ALL CONTENDERS. THE LOYAL SUPPORT WHICH CARLOS LLERAS HAS PROVIDED THE GOVERNMENT IN RECENT MONTHS IS EVIDENCE OF THE EFFICACY OF THIS STRATEGY.

10. THERE ARE, NEVERTHELESS, A NUMBER OF SOFT SPOTS IN THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL TEXTURE OF STABILITY WHICH ALTHOUGH NOW QUIESCENT OR POTENTIAL, MAY WELL GIVE LOPEZ ROUGH SAILING IN THE FUTURE. MORE THAN SUFFICIENT REASONS FOR SOCIAL AND POLITICAL UNREST CONTINUE TO EXIST, SCARCELY ABATED BY THE MANDATO CLARO. MOST COLOMBIANS LIVE IN POVERTY, AND PRICE RISES, ALTHOUGH AT A LOWER RATE THAN THE PAST, WORSEN THEIR PLIGHT. THE ANTI-INFLATIONARY MEASURES HAVE SHARPENED UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDER-EMPLOYMENT.

EXPECTATIONS THAT THE LOPEZ ADMINISTRATION WOULD QUICKLY ENACT
RADICAL MEASURES TO HELP THE DISADVANTAGED WERE NOT FULFILLED.
HOWEVER, THE GOVERNMENT HAS DEVELOPED AN IMAGINATIVE AND FAR-
REACHING PROGRAM DESIGNED TO REACH THE POOREST 40 PERCENT OF THE
POPULATION. CALLED THE NATIONAL FOOD AND NUTRITION PLAN, ITS
MAIN ELEMENTS ARE INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS FINANCED
BY FOREIGN ASSISTANCE INCLUDING AID. THE PROGRAM SHOULD PROVIDE
THE GOVERNMENT WITH A REASONABLE VEHICLE TO RESOLVE MANY OF
COLOMBIA'S MOST SERIOUS SOCIAL PROBLEMS.
VAKY

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GOVERNMENT REFORM, POLITICAL SUMMARIES, PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, CENTRAL GOVERNMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 SEP 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BOGOTA08457
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750306-0494
From: BOGOTA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750981/aaaactvp.tel
Line Count: 395
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 8
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 SEP 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <08 SEP 2003 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <14 NOV 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THE LOPEZ ADMINISTRATION TAKES HOLD
TAGS: PGOV, CO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006